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SUBJECT: MEDIA PLAY: SRI LANKAN MEDIA ACCUSE U.S. of
"SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS"

1. In a 9/1 editorial, "Self-inflicted wounds," the DAILY MIRROR (independent English daily), launched one of the most vigorous criticisms of U.S. policy seen in Sri Lanka's mainline press since the occupation of Iraq. "Self-inflicted wounds" accuses the U.S. of searching for "a new bogeyman" following the demise of the USSR, and finding "the ideal in Muslim fundamentalists." As a result, Islamic "fanatics" are in ascendancy and "America and its allies in Iraq are now reaping the whirlwind," pursuing policies that "breed more Bin Ladens in the Arab world and ... threat[en] ... cultured and freedom-loving people everywhere." The MIRROR concludes by suggesting that the U.S. avoid the kind of "sinister interests" that "created the Vietnam quagmire" and "focus more on justice and fair play as was the clear case with its founding fathers...."

2. "Self-inflicted wounds" follows verbatim:

Quote.

We have been vilifying regularly our political leaders for making a mockery of democracy and our nation since independence. Looking beyond our role models in US and UK we find some actions of their leaders too border on lunacy. Their so-called objective media is no better in dancing to the jingoistic tunes of their leaders, especially in the invasion of Iraq.

Fortunately for the world sanity in the west is not totally lost. We have the modern day Western culture capital of the world, France, which, though led by a centre right President, is able to see the world with a cultured measure.

Then we have the economic powerhouse of Europe, Germany, led by centre left Social Democrats, having the conviction to stand their ground. There were also lesser players like Russia, Canada and Belgium. Despite all types of cajoling and even being vilified by sections of western media, they rightly stood up to say No to the hasty plans of Bush and Blair. History may have already vindicated these naysayers.

For specially the economic-military machine that really wields power in America, with the demise of the Communist threat and the collapse of the East -bloc, they were really in search of a new bogeyman. They found the ideal in Muslim fundamentalists they themselves helped to activate to fight the Russians after their incursion into Afghanistan to prop up a puppet regime. Instead of trying to correct the wrong they helped to create with the liberation of Afghanistan, the US in particular and the West in general slept on their duty. The result was obvious.

In isolation Muslim religious schools that sprouted like mushrooms across Afghanistan and Pakistan, which served as the main base to oust the Russians, kept on churning fanatics. All that these fanatics required was the shout Allah o' Akbar to go into any type of action.

America and its allies in Iraq are now reaping the whirlwind. Saddam Hussein was an irritant, but he was also a secular person. Arrogant western countries, could not appreciate the fact he was ruling a volatile country. Luckily the West has begun to see that it is to their advantage to have left-leaning rulers like Mummur Gaddafi of Libya. But their realising the truth may be a bit too late. The West must realise the Arab masses are no longer fooled. They want to be in charge of their destiny. The West must stop using the corrupt and friendly regimes they help to stay in power, who would only help breed more Bin Ladens in the Arab world and a threat to all cultured and freedom-loving people everywhere.

More than anything else America should no longer try to legitimise whatever the Israeli does. The cycle of violence must stop with the Israelis. Premier Ariel Sharon's policy of always firing the last shot has to end. The ground rule must be, as long as there are no suicide bombs or attacks taking place in Israel, there must be no assassination of hard line activists among Palestinians. Then like elsewhere

in the world, encourage doves from both sides by supporting them. Like the West often tells us we like to tell them to give peace a chance. West Asia badly needs a respite.

Sinister interests in Washington too created the Vietnam quagmire. For greater involvement America staged the Tonkin Gulf incident, a fictitious attack that never took place. Similarly in this war we were told of Saddam's weapons of mass destruction, that they claimed could be activated within 45 minutes.

America is yet the great land of opportunity. It is time the American ruling elite focus more on justice and fair play as was the clear case with its founding fathers, and now with the world's wealth and especially its oil fields.

End quote

13. Comment. The DAILY MIRROR is the flagship publication of the Wijeya group, publishers of the SUNDAY TIMES (independent English weekender), LANKADEEPA (independent Sinhala daily), and SUNDAY LANKADEEPA (independent Sinhala weekender). The Wijeya Group's newspapers are among the most respected in Sri Lanka. End comment.

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